

**Representative Richard L. Steinberg**  
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**House District 106**



## Representative Richard L. Steinberg FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

### BE PREPARED FOR HURRICANE SEASON

The 2009 Hurricane Season began on June 1 and ends on November 30. All Floridians should be prepared and become informed about what to do if a severe storm threatens Florida. The Florida Division of Emergency Management ensures that Florida is prepared to respond and recover from emergencies. It may be helpful to visit their website -[www.floridadisaster.org](http://www.floridadisaster.org)- for information and assistance regarding hurricane preparation.

Also, clip out the box below so you have this important information handy should you need it.



**State of Florida Emergency Information Line (FEIL):** 1-800-342-3557  
**Florida Volunteer and Donations Hotline:** 1-800-FL-HELP1 (1-800-354-3571)  
**Florida Power and Light:** 1-800-4-OUTAGE (1-800-468-8243)  
**Elder Affairs:** 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337)  
**Department of Financial Services Insurance Claim Hotline:** 1-800-22-STORM (1-800-227-8676)  
**Agricultural & Consumer Services Price Gouging Hotline:** 1-800-HELP-FLA (1-800-435-7352)  
**Miami-Dade County Department of Emergency Management:** (305-468-5400) [www.miamidade.gov/oem/](http://www.miamidade.gov/oem/)  
**State Representative Richard Steinberg:** 305-535-5445



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Marlene Taylor

#### DISTRICT SECRETARY:

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#### COUNCILS/COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

- Insurance, Business & Financial Affairs Policy Committee
- Roads, Bridges & Ports Policy Committee
- State & Community Colleges & Workforce Policy Committee
- Transportation & Economic Development Appropriations Committee

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Thank you for the honor of serving you in the Florida House of Representatives.

This year's legislative session was one of the toughest on record. My priorities throughout the session were to focus on Florida's economic recovery, creating new jobs, public education, health care, public safety and fighting for middle-class families and those who need the services of our state.

In writing a new state budget, we faced a \$6 billion revenue shortfall. The Legislature responded by reducing programs and services, draining trust funds and increasing fees, many of which will impact working-class families. For these and other reasons, I voted against the budget because I don't think it adequately met our state's needs.

But I am pleased that I was one of the first in the Legislature to endorse the use of new federal economic recovery dollars approved by President Barack Obama and Congress that were used to help balance the proposed new \$66.5 billion state budget for Fiscal Year 2009-10.

This year, my colleagues and I in the Florida House of Representatives undertook a number of serious initiatives that will improve the lives of our friends and neighbors:

- In public safety, we championed legislative efforts to crack down on the illegal sale of prescription drugs, and we passed legislation to require law enforcement to provide victims of sexual battery with vital information about services.
- In the education arena, we won approval for a measure to engage more students in meaningful activities in their schools and communities. And we repeatedly demanded that education funding not be cut despite tough economic circumstances.
- Throughout the session, we fought for seniors and people who rely on health care services, and won approval for legislation to require Medigap coverage for certain patients needing dialysis or kidney transplants.

This newsletter highlights some of the key issues during the 2009 legislative session as well as provides information that you may find useful. It has been a pleasure to serve you in the Legislature and I look forward to next year's session as well as your continued support. If I can ever be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to call my office at (305) 535-5445, or email me at [Richard.Steinberg@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:Richard.Steinberg@myfloridahouse.gov).

Sincerely,

*Richard L. Steinberg*  
State Representative, District 106



# REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD STEINBERG: PROTECTING YOUR INTERESTS

## MAKING EDUCATION A PRIORITY - FROM K THROUGH COLLEGE

I worked tirelessly alongside my colleagues in the Legislature to secure much-needed funds for Florida's schools, teachers and students, and I am proud of our efforts.

I am pleased that the Legislature has put to use nearly \$2 billion in federal economic recovery funds approved by President Barack Obama's administration. These dollars will help give schools and teachers the resources they need in hopes that we will one day have a world-class education system.

I hope that we can improve education funding. The proposed Fiscal Year 2009-10 state budget increases per-student spending only modestly, reaching a statewide average of \$6,873.



We can do better, especially considering Florida school funding has fallen since the Fiscal Year 2007-08 level of \$7,128 per student..

## KEEPING A CAP ON PROPERTY INSURANCE

The Legislature took modest steps this session to stabilize the property insurance market, ease rate hikes for many Floridians, and give all consumers new options for choosing a property insurance company of their choice. This session I advocated to freeze Citizens Insurance rates. Dramatic rate hikes for customers of state-run Citizens Insurance were set to go into effect January 2010. But under legislation passed during this session, those increases will be capped at 10 percent instead of increases of 75 percent in coastal Miami-Dade. This step should provide some comfort to home and business owners and bolster the actuarial soundness of Citizens' rates.

Still, major insurance reform remains undone and our state faces too many financial risks should a major storm come our way. Further, I am sorely disappointed by the Legislature's decision to stop funding the tremendously successful "My Safe Florida Home" program, which provides free home inspections and other useful information to consumers. If this program expires, I am concerned that the state would be ignoring its responsibility to protect Floridians.



## A COMMITMENT TO A 'GREENER' FLORIDA

Across the globe, people are creating jobs around renewable energy. When it comes to renewable energy policy, Florida has an opportunity that can't be missed and I will continue to support this issue. Toward this goal, House Bill 1317 would have implemented a system known as "renewable energy dividends" based on a model used in Europe that has dramatically increased use of renewable fuels.

The goal is to expand the sources of power generation beyond centralized power plants and make it more economically feasible for small businesses and homeowners to install solar-power equipment and other alternative energy sources. While this legislation was not brought up for hearing, I hope to join my colleagues in fighting for this proposal during the next legislative session.

## IMPROVING AND EXPANDING HEALTH CARE OPTIONS

While it is hard to see the budget balanced at the expense of some important health programs, I was proud we were able to hold the line on Florida's Medically Needy program, which provides essential health care for low-income families. We also managed to increase the number of nursing home diversion slots. As many as 17,200 of Florida's frailest elders, who would otherwise be served in nursing homes under Medicaid, will soon be able to receive services in their homes and communities.

I am distressed by the decision to reduce Medicaid reimbursement rates to nursing homes and a cut to some health initiatives for minorities. But I am pleased by our successful efforts to fund the state's Meds-AD program, which helps seniors purchase medications.



## SPONSORING LEGISLATION TO PROTECT FLORIDA'S CHILDREN

This session I sponsored House Bill 357 which strengthened child-restraint requirements for children 4 through 7 years of age who are riding in a car. While this bill did not pass this year, I look forward to continuing to support this and other child safety issues.

I was also a strong advocate in the fight to preserve and expand our state's KidCare program to provide health insurance to low income children. To apply for Florida KidCare, visit [www.floridakidcare.org](http://www.floridakidcare.org) or call 888-540-5437.

